



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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Dear Principals and Teachers,

Hello! My name is Kathy Langley and I am the Manager of the White House Visitor Center (WHVC) within President's Park, a unit of the National Park Service. One of my roles as Manager of the WHVC is to oversee the many education programs for our park.

Since July 2011, Sonja Van De Walle, who works for the "Treaty of Ghent" in Belgium, Erica Gees, who is the Executive Director for the AIA Legacy, Inc. which is a non-profit organization that oversees the Octagon Museum, and I have been organizing an international educational program that focuses on the War of 1812 and the Treaty of Ghent. As you are well aware, the War of 1812 started on June 18, 1812, when President James Madison signed the declaration of war against Britain. This summer will mark the 200th anniversary of that signing. Events to celebrate this anniversary will begin in Maryland and the surrounding Washington metropolitan area communities this June.

The National Park Service, President's Park, and the AIA Legacy, Inc. have partnered with the Treaty of Ghent to establish an international educational program that will focus on the War of 1812 and the Treaty of Ghent. The goal is to team up different schools from the Washington, DC area with different schools in Belgium, the UK, and Canada. This program would not begin until the fall of 2012. I'm writing your school to see if you would be interested in this learning endeavor.

The park will have a two-day teacher symposium on August 1 and August 2, 2012, at the White House Visitor Center to introduce educators to the War of 1812. One goal of the symposium is to show educators how this topic can tie into the current core standards that already exist at the high school and middle school level.

Other goals of this symposium will be to:

- 1) Introduce 30 high school and middle school teachers to the War of 1812 in the Washington metropolitan area.
- 2) Provide teachers from this symposium an opportunity to be one of the first to pilot this international educational program between Belgium and the United States.
- 3) Provide teachers with an opportunity to meet author, Anthony Pitch who wrote *The Burning of Washington: The British Invasion of 1814*. We are anticipating having the Curator of the White House, Bill Allman, speak on how some of the artifacts seized by both British and American "looters" are finding their way back into the White House collection. We hope to have First Lady Dolley Madison portrayed by Rebecca Roper, a President's Park volunteer, discuss the role of the First Lady in safeguarding some very important documents and artifacts as well as her family's time in the Octagon House.
- 4) Show the teachers how to produce a video using Photo Story or another media platform to create a short video on the War of 1812. This video will include primary images, quotes, news articles, cartoons, maps, sound effects, music, and text.

- 5) Review with the teachers the details of how this pilot program will work with the students and teachers in Belgium, United States and possibly U.K. and Canada.
- 6) At the completion of the teacher symposium teachers will be able to sign up to participate in the **international educational** pilot program where students from the United States and Ghent would produce their interpretation of the War of 1812 as it impacted their countries. The classes would then meet to exchange video presentations and have a discussion about the war.

The students from the US would gather at the board room at AIA Legacy, Inc. which is located next to the Octagon Museum. The students in Ghent would show their 7- to 10-minute video on the War of 1812 based on the Treaty of Ghent and the peace that resulted by the signing of this treaty. The students from the United States would show their video interpretations of the war based on where they live (i.e., the District of Columbia, Maryland, or Virginia). The schools in the United States would incorporate the burning of the White House and the US Capitol into their presentations. President's Park and the Octagon Museum will have staff available to assist teachers throughout this process with onsite visits to the school, coordinating and scheduling the international aspects of the program as well as providing lesson plans and free busing to support this learning experience for the students. We are also looking at bringing in a volunteer from Ghent to help with this process.

Please let us know if your school is interested in this extraordinary educational opportunity to build a bridge of educational excellence for youth between the United States and Belgium. Your students would serve as young ambassadors representing the educational community within the metropolitan area.

Should you have any questions on this educational opportunity, please do not hesitate to give me a call at 202-208-1631 or by email at: Kathy_Langley@nps.gov. I thank you, in advance, for your time and consideration of this request. I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Kathy Langley
WHVC Manager
President's Park
National Park Service